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Mellon

VICTORINE:

An Opera, in Three Acts,

COMPOSED BY

ALFRED MELLON

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EDMUND FALCONER:

FIRST PRODUCED AT

THE ROYAL ENGLISH OPERA, COVENT GARDEN,

UNDER THE MANAGEMENT OF

MISS LOUISA PYNE AND MR. W. HARRISON,

MONDAY, DECEMBER 19TH, 1859.

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LONDON:

PUBLISHED AND SOLD IN THE THEATRE.

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NOTICE TO MANAGERS.

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ROYAL ENGLISH OPERA,

December 19th, 1859.

5 Aug. 58. Clark.

Dramatis Personæ.



JULIEN	MR. SANTLEY.
MICHEL	...	...	...	...	MR. HENRY HAIGH.
HECTOR	...	...	...	...	MR. H. CORRI.
GRIFFON	...	...	...	...	MR. G. HONEY.
CAPT. CLAUDE	...	...	...	...	MR. WALLWORTH.
LIEUT. FONBLANQUE	...	...	...	...	MR. BARTLEMAN.
LA ROCHE	...	...	...	...	MR. LYALL.
SOYECOURT	...	...	...	...	MR. TERROTT.
DE BONN	...	...	...	...	MR. DE SOLLA.
LOUISE	...	...	...	...	MISS THIRLWALL.
JUSTINE	...	...	...	...	MISS RANOE.
FANCHET	...	...	...	...	MISS ST. CLAIR.
VICTORINE	...	...	...	...	MISS PAREPA.

ACT I.

SCENE I.—*A small chamber on the sixth floor of a lodging-house, simply furnished—door in flat L. H.—small bed with white curtains at back R. H.—toilet table with looking-glass—water carafe, tumbler, &c. R.H.—small work-table R. C.—table L. H., chairs—VICTORINE seated R. H. of table, working at embroidery—LOUISE seated L. reading a novel—lighted candle on table.*

DUETTO.

LOU. (*aside*) Oh what delight !
VIC. (*aide*) Oh what despite—
LOU. (*aside*) The charming tale I read !
VIC. (*aside*) To work so hard for need !
LOU. (*aloud*) Oh delightful !
VIC. What's delightful ?
LOU. I sha'n't tell thee.
VIC. Thou art spiteful !
Prithee tell me.
LOU. This charming story here,
Leave off thy work, and read.
VIC. No, no ; I work for need :
The pleasure costs too dear—
'Twere such a waste of time.
LOU. Oh, no, the work's sublime :
What rapture, with romance,
Thro' visioned scenes to stray !
VIC. The maid may meet mischance,
Who treads too oft that way.
LOU. Such charming girls as we
Were not design'd for toil.

VIC. But pleasure seems to me
More like than work to spoil.
LOU. How can that be ?
VIC. I'll tell to thee.

AIR.

"Thy duties, child, all times perform :"
(Thus mother used to speak)
"They'll bring thee blessings sure to charm,
And never pale thy cheek.
In pleasure's cup there's this alloy—
Of sweets themselves it tires,
But toil gives back a smile to joy,
When Heav'n grants its desires."

LOU. Why talk in such a strain ?
The moral's very bad :
'Twould suit if you were plain,
And ne'er a lover had.
"Enjoy whene'er you can"
(My mother used to say),
It is the wisest plan,
For care comes every day.

DUETTO *repeated.*

What rapture, &c.

VIC. My dear Louise, my mother was so wise and so truly loving.

LOU. Ah ! yes. She had too much respect for the useful and too little for the ornamental. To live in a garret all your life, a pretty prospect for a handsome young girl.

VIC. Oh, it does not follow that I am always to lead this life. I am sure Michel loves me.

LOU. Michel ! a great catch, truly ! An upholsterer's man. Now, only reflect upon the difference, should you excite a passion in the heart of a man of fortune.

VIC. Well, now ; but no, I'll not think about it.

LOU. Not think about what ? Ah you have a love secret, I know, by your blushes. I'm the best confidant in the world, my dear ; do tell me all about it.

VIC. Well, the landlord of the house, you know, is a young man, about twenty-five years of age.

LOU. Yes ; Mons. Julien.

VIC. A few days back, what do you think he proposed to do.

LOU. Perhaps to run away with you.

VIC. No ; but to place me as a pupil in the Royal Academy of Music ; and he assured me that with such a voice as mine, must one day become a first-rate singer.

LOU. Of course you accepted his offer ?

VIC. (*sighing*) No, I refused it.

LOU. Refused ! why you must be downright mad.

VIC. Hark, don't I hear some one mounting the stairs.

LOU. Ah, it is he.

VIC. What, Julien ?

LOU. No, my Griffon.

[VICTORINE *sits down to work.* Enter GRIFFON, *with a bottle and a paper of biscuits.*

GRI. Hail to the shrine, the domicile of beauty ; lovely Victorine, I am one of the sincerest of your adorers ; peerless Louise. I am your slave. I have run up the whole six pair of stairs without stopping. Every one must admit that you are certainly exalted characters. You needn't put yourself out of the way on my account, though I have some rather particular business.

VIC. What can it be ?

GRI. Only this trifling matter of a note, which I was requested to hand to you, postage free.

VIC. A note for me ! heavens ? from whom ?

LOU. I dare say it's from the nice young man.

GRI. It comes from a very distinguished-looking and well-dressed person. I think he said his name was Julien.

LOU. (*aside to VIC.*) That's the gentleman.

GRI. Well, take it. I cannot keep my arm stretched out like a tailor's model.

LOU. (*taking the note from GRIFFON and handing it to VIC.*) Take it, and don't be foolish.

VIC. (*crumples it up in her hand*) I shall not read it. I feel that I ought not.

GRI. Humph! so much for writing love letters to a pretty woman; what a profitable result.

VIC. I'm going down to the first floor to take this work to the lady who resides there, and I shall go by the back staircase, to avoid meeting this young man. [*Exit. R. H.*]

GRI. That young woman has the strangest ideas of any I ever met with.

LOU. Oh, don't agitate yourself, she is only gone to read the note on the staircase.

GRI. Ay, she thinks too much of that upholstering fellow, a mean-spirited mechanic.

GRI. A fellow that has not a louis to bless himself.

LOU. Whereas Mr. Julien is very rich.

GRI. Oh, yes, we must bring their union about. Hush! she is here. [*Retires towards back.*]

Enter VICTORINE, R.H.

VIC. It is provoking to work so hard for so little money, and to be scolded, too.

LOU. Well, it's your own fault—you might have workpeople and servants waiting on you, to be scolded.

VIC. Silence, Louise.

LOU. I'm sure, with your personal beauty, you might command—

GRI. Everything. Those magnificent shoulders were moulded

on purpose to set off Cashmeres, and those delicate little ears to exhibit diamonds.

LOU. But what are you crumpling up in your hand in that manner?

VIC. Nothing—only that young man's letter.

LOU. The seal's broken—you have read it, of course?

VIC. Indeed I have done no such thing.

LOU. Upon my word you act like a simpleton, Victorine.

GRI. Louise is quite right. You can't tell what stupendously important things may be in that letter. Suppose now there should be a plot to set the house on fire, or to turn it inside out, and run away with you in the bustle attendant upon that extraordinary operation.

VIC. Pshaw! *I* will not open his letter.

LOU. Suppose somebody else opened it for you?

GRI. Hearing a thing read is not reading.

[LOUISE takes the letter from VICTORINE, and opens it.

GRI. (*Reads*) "My adored one"—

LOU. Oh, delicious!

GRI. Very impassioned indeed. "My adored one, notwithstanding the cruel coldness with which you have repelled the most respectful passion"—poor young fellow!—"your welfare has not ceased to occupy my thoughts"—very delicately preluded. "You may to-morrow enter the Academy."

VIC. Can that be true?

GRI. "And become the occupant of handsome apartments. Do not be alarmed by this offer. You will be at home, and no one will have the right of intruding their visits. To-morrow I leave Paris for some days. If I should not have the happiness of hearing from you, I shall be the most miserable of mankind, but can never cease to love, to adore you. Julien Dellamere."

LOU. Oh, beautiful! pathetic!

GRI. Touching in the extreme; it makes me weep, but I am cursed with excessive sensibility. There's some one on the staircase.

VIC. Ah! it is he, coming for an answer to his letter. He shall never know that I have read it.

[*She snatches the letter, and tears it up.* LOUISE and GRIFFON *sits* L.H., *table.* MICHEL *appears at door.*

ALL. Michel.

GRI. The mahogany shaving.

MIC. Dear me, I am almost out of breath. I have strode up four pair of stairs at a time, but it was to see my dear Victorine, and I could have climbed to the top of a mountain. Here, Victorine, take this rose. I have brought it from the tree that you gave me on my birthday.

BALLAD—"FOR I LOVE THEE ALONE."

This flower, dear maid, doth image thee,

Yet is more like the love

That makes on earth a Heav'n to me,

All other joys above :

The parent stem whereon it grew

No bud save this has blown ;

As it no rival beauty knew,

So I love thee alone.

Its bloom and fragrance only seem

Reflected love from thee,

Thus in the pure lymph of a stream

A fainter Heav'n we see.

It grew to life beneath my care—

Nor other watch has known ;

My heart's true emblem take and wear,

For I love thee alone.

[VICTORINE *places the rose in a glass.*

MIC. Dear, dear Victorine !

[*Takes both her hands.*

GRI. Good day, friend Michel—take a nut ?

MIC. Good day, sir (*aside*)—he's always here.

LOU. It is some time since we have seen you.

MIC. Why yes, we have been very busy of late ; I have good news for you, Victorine.

VIC. Indeed what is that ?

MIC. My father has given me a little money to set us up, so I have arranged that we shall be married directly.

VIC. So suddenly ?

GRI. Allow me, young man, to observe, that you do not proceed in this matter with sufficient delicacy, or in accordance with the usage of civilised society.

MIC. Sir, I did not require your opinion or advice.

VIC. But, before marrying, I must make it a condition that you will take comfortable apartments.

MIC. To be insolvent in six months.

VIC. At least, I suppose you will hire a servant.

MIC. Certainly ; when we have acquired the means of paying her.

GRI. Ay, in ten or a dozen years' time.

LOU. (*crosses to VIC.*) To make a mere kitchen-wench of that poor creature.

VIC. No more, Louise.

MIC. Your heart is changed, Victorine. The story I was told about a rival, I perceive, was not without foundation.

VIC. No, no !

FINALE—MICHEL, VICTORINE, LOUISE, GRIFFON.

RECITATIVE.

MIC. Wilt be my wife, and so this scandal end ?

LOU. (*to VIC.*) Don't give an answer, love,—at least to-day.

GRI. (*aside*) About his business I should quickly send.

VIC. (*to him*) A little time to think, good Michel, pray ?

MIC. But till to-morrow, then the truth I'll know.

VIC. You shall.

LOU. He'll not.

GRI. He may—his leave to go.

QUARTETTE.

MIC. To-day concealing
Thy true heart's feeling
This night revealing,
To-morrow you must show.

VIC. This night revealing
My heart's true feeling,
No more concealing,
To-morrow I will show.

LOU. Don't mind his grieving,
But still deceiving,
In doubt still leaving,
To-morrow nothing show.

GRI. To my poor thinking,
There's no use blinking,
That he is sinking,
And going down below.

VIC. (*as they are going*)
Good night, till morning beams.

MIC. How long to me that seems;

GRI. and LOU. Good night, and pleasant dreams!

[MICHEL, LOUISE, and GRIFFON *exceunt*.]

SCENA.—RECITATIVE.

To-morrow, then, must I be Michel's bride,
If not, perhaps to grief and shame allied.
His heart is good, his love I'm sure sincere,
But our's would be a toilsome life, I fear;
With scant and humble means through life to mate,
My glass tells me not such should be my fate!

SONG.—“TO LOVE, AND BE LOVED, I WISH STILL.”

Though Michel is handsome, he's rough-spun and poor—
Julien's air, like his manner, is fine;
A life of privation I couldn't endure,
But my good name I ne'er will resign:

Between them I'm puzzled to fix on my fate,
 And in doubt I don't know my own will,
 For, though I should like to be wealthy and great,
 To love, and be loved, I wish still!

[Looking in glass.]

Oh! what a graceful shape and air,
 And what a pretty face;
 I must in simple truth declare,
 A drawing-room I'd grace!

That I'm handsome I know—
 Julien worships my glance,
 And no day he lets go,
 But he makes some advance!

With wish to be,
 Light, joyous, free—
 What misery,
 This slave to be!

[Chimes on church heard.]

My thoughts directed by her care,
 No wrong has e'er beguiled,
 Then hearken, heav'n, my soul-felt prayer,
 And let her guard her child.

Oh! yes, now sinking down to rest,
 A weary child of toil,

As slumbering on my mother's breast,
 Her arms shall round me coil!

[Repeated as she sinks on couch. Through an illuminated panel above the bed the mother's spirit appears as holding watch over her sleep.]

ACT DROP SLOWLY DESCENDS.

ACT II.

SCENE I.—*An elegant boudoir, superbly furnished—on one side a divan, on the other side a long swing glass—a footman is sitting reading a newspaper—JUSTINE is arranging the ornaments—a coachman in handsome livery is in attendance—the butler, cook, and other servants and their friends.*

Enter VICTORINE, L., in an elegant carriage dress followed by a GROOM who is loaded with band-boxes and parcels.

VIC. There, throw all those down on the divan, Francois, and Justine will put them in order.

[The GROOM obeys order and exits.]

VIC. Go and order me some chocolate.

JUS. Immediately, madam.

[Exit, U. E. R.]

VIC. What shall I do with myself this morning? Drive to Montmorency? No, I shan't go out at all, I must find some amusement here.

CAVATINA.*

Oh bright were my visions in those happy days,
When smiles of glad fortune enlivened my ways;
When hope's glowing sun seemed for ever to shine,
And fondly he whispered, Oh, wilt thou be mine?
His soul-beaming eye was my life's guiding star,
And gloom from my mind was banished afar.

Lightly I danced and cheerily sang
Through the gay world of frolic and pleasure,

* *The words of this Cavatina are by Mr. G. HODDER.*

Teeming with joy the merry bells rang,
 Music and mirth in full measure.

La, la, la — La, la, la.

They told me at length in my roseate dreams
 This world with its joys is less bright than it seems;
 And when in our revels we feel not a care,
 Too oft our gay moments are friends to despair.

Happily still my spirits are free,
 Love in my heart with playfulness beaming;
 Basking in pleasure, singing with glee,
 Care seems to fly while the sunlight is gleaming.

La, la, la — La, la, la.

Enter FOOTMAN, who announces

FOOT. M. de la Griffonière and the Baroness Louise.

Enter GRIFFON and LOUISE, L. She is attired in a handsome riding-habit, and he in a fashionable riding-dress.

CONCERTED PIECE.

GRI. Pray let me, madam, introduce a friend,
 One who will help your money, dear, to spend,

LOU. A friend, I hope he's handsome?

VIC. And genteel?

GRI. His merits best his presence will reveal,
 (*calling off*) My dear friend Hector, pri'thee walk this way,
 To these fair nymphs your manly homage pay.

[*Enter HECTOR.*

HEC. Behold me, comrade? Demoiselles, your slave,
 A soldier I, gallant as well as brave.

VIC. Oh what a figure!

GRI. Is it not sublime?

VIC. It might be in the olden giant's time

LOU. Were such broad shoulders ever seen before?
 They're sure three feet across—

HEC. Two inches more.

You make me blush ! fair creatures, you're divine.
Beholding, I must worship at your shrine.

GER. My Mars to Venus pays his court, you see ?

VIC. (*aside*)

A Vulcan sure, and not a Mars is he.

(*to* HEC.) You've been a soldier, of the wars can tell.

HEC. Of many a gallant deed by flood and fell.

SONG—"A SOLDIER'S LIFE FOR ME."

The jovial camp, the bivouac fire,
When mirth takes place of martial ire—
The midnight watch, the ambuscade,
It may be on the cold earth laid,
A foeman's corse or comrade's breast,
The only pillow for your rest ;
The summons of the mustering drum,
The thrilling cry, "They come ! they come !"
The bugles sounding cheerily,
To me, to me, are revelry.
Oh ! yes, a soldier's life for me.

VIC. Perhaps you would like some refreshment ; in this room (*pointing off* L. H.) you will find a table with confectionary and wines.

HEC. 'Gad, well thought. I'll do them justice, for I am a little sharp-set. [*Exit* L. H.

Enter JULIEN.

VIC. You here again, Mons. Julien ?

JUL. Yes ; I cannot bring myself to believe that you have really forsaken me. Surely, my affection, my generosity, entitle me to consideration—gratitude.

VIC. Oh ! yes ; always reproaching me with what you have done.

JUL. It is true, and I am forsaken ; and yet I love thee still.

BALLAD—"I NEVER CAN FORGET."

In vain, though banish'd from thy heart,
 I strive to bend to fortune's will ;
 I cannot with fond memory part,
 Thine image, dear one, haunts me still.
 Thy smile, that dazzling beam of light,
 That gilded hope's bright morning ray,
 That starr'd the darkest hours of night,
 I worship still, tho' turned away.
 Though banish'd from thy heart, still mine
 Remembers thee with fond regret,
 I know thy love can ne'er be mine,
 But ah ! I never can forget.

Nor time nor change of scene to me,
 Afford their balm to soothe my pain ;
 My heart, tho' broken, clings to thee,
 Reluctant to unloose thy chain.
 Thy form, each feature, every grace ;
 As first they dawn'd upon my view,
 The tyrant mem'ry may retrace,
 But never can one pang subdue.
 Though banished, &c.

SONG.

LOU. to JUL. A gentleman found a rich treasure one day,
 There was nobody by, so he carried away ;
 "'Twill cost something at first," did the gentleman say,
 "But never heed that—in the end it will pay."

Now the treasure, it proved a rich treasure indeed,
 And all who beheld, said that fame was its meed :
 Then the treasure began of itself to take heed,
 And the moral's so plain, you may run as you read.'

The gentleman wanted to keep for himself,
 For a niggard was he both of pleasure and pelf ;
 But the treasure knew better, a sly little elf,
 And the gentleman now has been put on the shelf.

GRI. I quite agree with you, he's shabby, mean—
 And in his company I'd not be seen.

JUL. to VIC. Do you too join with them to mock my woe,

VIC. I've but to say—you have your leave to go. [*Exit.*]

LOU. Or else the servants, sir, the door will show. [*Exit.*]

GRI. You hear good man you have your leave to go—

Or else the servants, sir, the door will show. [*Exit.*]

JUL. 'Tis plain, she no longer loves me. Have I grown old
 or ugly ? (*looks in large glass*) No—no, not so : she's surely mad
 to jilt a man like me—(*stands admiring himself in glass.*)

Enter MICHEL and SERVANT.

SER. This way Mr. Upholsterer.

MIC. (*recognising JUL.*) That scoundrel here—your mistress's
 name is—

SER. Madam St. Victor—remain here whilst I go to inform her.

MIC. I would rather call again, as there is a gentleman whose
 presence, if awaiting to see your mistress, will interfere with my
 business.

SER. He ? Oh, my mistress refuses to acknowledge his claims to
 acquaintance ! She has just desired him to leave the house, and if
 he doesn't go quickly, he will have to be thrust out. [*Exit.*]

JUL. Ah ! who are you ?

MIC. Who am I ? I'm Michel, the artisan, whose bride you
 misled by flatteries and dazzling promises.

JUL. (*aside*) Confound it ! this is an awkward meeting.

MIC. I am the tradesman, whom you, under a false name and
 still unknown, deceived by an assumption of wealth, and from
 whom you obtained a credit of five hundred pounds. In tracing
 the defaulter, whose *alias* disfigured my account book—I dis-

covered him to be the wretch whose true name was more sternly scored upon my heart for a heavier debt —I meet both in you, and were it not in a stranger's house——

JUL. (*aside*) A stranger's house—he doesn't know. I must try and deceive him.

DUETT.

JUL. Good sir, you labour under some mistake,
I'm not the man—

MIC. The scoundrel—

JUL. That you mean.

MIC. Deny it, and I'll by the collar take ;
'Twere pleasure such a rogue as you to shake.

JUL. Was surely such a wild beast never seen ;
My life's in danger, help !

MIC. Call out or stir,
I'll whip you as I would a noisy cur.

JUL. I do confess I did to you this wrong,
But yet your sympathy should go along
With my unhappy state.

MIC. Indeed, pray how ?

JUL. The maid for whose sake I got in your debt,
In many others, too, I must avow,
Has cast me off, and quite abandoned now.

MIC. That's the best news that I have heard as yet,
Though she has wrong'd, she has revenged me, too,
Some good remains, since she has cast off you ;
And now at once you'll please to pay my bill.

JUL. Upon my honour, sir, I've all the will,
But have no means ; I'm fairly run aground.
Purse empty, credit gone.

MIC. Oh welcome sound.
By love forsaken, too ; the knave has passed
To double bankruptcy and shame at last.

Oh life has joy in store,
 Since he's forsaken now,
 By fate and friends thrown o'er,
 Shame's brand upon his brow.

JUL. Oh yes, I life deplore,
 By love forsaken now,
 By fate and friends thrown o'er,
 To live I don't know how.

Have some compassion, pray,
 Some pity on me take.

MIC. Hence, reptile, hence, away ;
 Bid not my wrath awake.

JUL. Have some compassion, pray.

MIC. Hence, reptile, hence, away.

JUL. Some pity on me take.

MIC. Hence, hence, &c.

[Drives him off, then casts himself into chair.]

VICTORINE enters.

VIC. Ah, 'tis Michel. How strange an emotion agitates me !
 Let me see if he will know me.

*[She sits before glass, and begins arranging her head-dress,
 but coughs. MICHEL starts.]*

VIC. Don't rise—be seated, friend. I am quite rejoiced at the
 chance which has brought you here.

MIC. Madam ! that voice !

VIC. Yes—I feel quite happy at finding myself again in your
 company.

MIC. *(aside)* Can it possibly be ? No, no, it surely cannot.

VIC. Is it possible, Michel, that you do not recollect Victorine ?

MIC. *(rising)* Then it is she.

VIC. Yes, I *am* Victorine, whom you loved so well.

MIC. Is it possible, surrounded by wealth and splendour. Oh
 no, it is not Victorine, whom I did *indeed* love so well.

[He is going.]

VIC. How, you quit me so soon ?

MIC. It is better, madam.

VIC. Remain, I beg of you, as a friend.

MIC. We are no longer friends, madam ; we ceased to be so from the wretched day when, coming to seek you, to make you my wife—I found only solitude and despair.

BALLAD.

The heart that is too lightly won
 Will be as lightly lost,
 The flowers that soonest meet the sun
 Die earliest in the frost.
 But Love deceived is widow'd then—
 Life has no spell in store
 Can call its lost mate back again
 When once Love's dream is o'er.
 With virtue fleets e'en Beauty's charm
 Like sunbeams on the dead,
 Its smiles may light, but cannot warm,
 The heart's respect is dead.
 Then farewell, false one, fare thee well,
 Smile on, but never more
 Hope thou to re-impose the spell—
 Oh, no, love's dream is o'er.

[Rushes out.]

VIC. I am now humbled ; ah ! these hateful presents, they now excite but my disgust.

[She throws the things about and stamps on them.]

Enter LOUISE and GRIFFON.

LOU. Hoity toity ! what in the name of wonder are you about ?
 —Why surely a misunderstanding with your upholsterer could never agitate you so powerfully ? *[She picks them up.]*

GRI. The company assemble and the cry is, we want our brightest ornament, where is the divine Madame St. Victor ?

VIC. And do they really say so ?

GRI. Positively! "We miss her from her accustomed place, beside that handsome fellow M. de la Griffonière." Everybody looks for you, everybody wishes for you, everybody dies for you. Absent or present, you are the sovereign. But that is partly accounted for by the fine horses with which I furnish you.

Enter JUSTINE.

JUS. The dining-room is full of company, amongst whom are two strangers. [VICTORINE and LOUISE *exit*.

GRI. (*aside*) My intended pigeons. Justine, my dear, you are the very person I was looking for; now do, my good girl, take care and have the card-tables all ready.

JUS. Here they are, sir, I have only to light the candles and place the cards.

GRI. Yes, yes, to place the cards—that is the principal thing. Here are the four packs that we shall want *this* evening.

[*Drawing them from his pocket.*

JUS. Oh, sir, we have plenty here.

GRI. Never mind that, be a good girl, and do as I tell you, place *these* four packs on the tables, and keep your mistress's for another time. You are a *charming* girl, an *excellent* servant, the dinner was delightful.

JUS. I am glad you liked it sir. [*Places cards, and exits.*

GRI. Now mind the cards, my dear!

Enter LOUISE, HECTOR and GUESTS.

HEC. (*aside to GRIFFON*)

Now, comrade, let's to work—no more delay;

Let's pluck these pigeons quickly and away.

GRI. (*to GUESTS*)

Messieurs, a quiet rubber you will make,

GUE. With pleasure.

GRI. (*to HECTOR*) You, sir, I as a partner take.

HEC. With all my heart; cut, deal, and let's begin.

Stakes down; for, gentlemen, I play to win.

GUE. Of course, no pleasure else were in the game.

GRI. I hope, when it is done, you'll think the same.

HEC. I shall no doubt, my pockets nobly lined.

GRI. (*aside to HECTOR*)

Don't win too fast !

HEC. (*gruffly*) Oh ! your own business mind.

LOU. And while they play the other guests shall dance,
And light-winged mirth the passing hours enhance.

[*They sit and play; short dance, during which business at card-table. HECTOR and GRIFFON win and pocket stakes. Losers rise; others take their places and continue game.*]

Enter VICTORINE at the end of dance.

GUE. Here comes the guard !

HEC. The guard ?

GRI. We'd better run.

GUE. No, no ! You must restore the gold you've won.

[*An Officer and Soldiers appear.*]

CHORUS.

OFF. In the King's name we draw
Our bright swords, to maintain
His commands and the law—
Your crimes to restrain.
Quickly beg for your lives,
And surrender at will ;
Who opposes or strives
We've commission to kill.

VIC. What want you here ?

OFF. This house, a gambler's den,
The haunt of knaves and most suspicious men,
I come to close ; its tenants prisoners make,
And all before a magistrate must take.

VIC. Oh ! dire disgrace !

OFF. Come, come ; I cannot wait.

VIC. Oh ! Michel, you predicted this sad fate.

QUARTETTE.

VIC. Oh, pleasure dearly bought,
That ends in such disgrace ;
What horror to my thought
The shame that I must face.

LOU. Experience must be bought,
But never mind disgrace ;
It only lives to thought,
We'll laugh it out of face.

HEC. To be thus trapp'd and caught,
A soldier doth disgrace ;
'Twould better suit my thought
To give these dogs a chase.

GRI. The shame to me is naught ;
To lose the cash, disgrace :
That's horror to my thought,
And shames me out of face.

END OF ACT II.

ACT III.

SCENE I.—*Plain chamber. Window overlooking the Seine at back. Window R. H. ; door L. H.*

Enter VICTORINE plainly dressed.

RECITATIVE.

VIC. Wealth gone ; beauty withered ; my former friends have all forsaken me, and the stranger world in which I live frowns on and treats me as an alien. I could bear this, might I but forget the past ; but no, remembrance still clings to me and evokes the spirit of every bygone joy to contrast the wretchedness of my present life. Oh ! why, why cannot I bury recollection in the same grave with happiness.

ROMANCE.

Why ling'ring mourner, Memory,
Haunt'st thou joy's broken shell ?
In losing all I loved, I'd be
Bereft of thee as well.
Why, spectre of the buried past,
Wilt thou not share its tomb ?
Oblivion's mantle round thee cast,
Or mine be instant doom.

Thou com'st between me and the light ;
Thy voice drives rest away ;
I hear thee, sad one, through the night,
I see thee all the day—
With cypress garland round thy brow
Still bidding me good bye,
But never parting—prithee now
Oh leave, or let me die.

Every day adds to my distress—my humiliation. Twice have I been tempted to end my wretched being—the means are here (*shows phial*)—poison! Whilst I possess this, I feel armed against the further endurance of shame, and can better bear the sufferings of privation. [*Knock at door.*]

VIC. Come in.

Enter LOUISE poorly dressed.

LOU. I beg pardon, madam; but as I see by the card in the window you purpose taking in lodgers, I have called to say I shall feel happy to be favoured with your custom.

VIC. That voice! Louise, do you not know me?

LOU. Heavens, Victorine, you in this position?

VIC. Yes, to this your sad advice has brought me.

LOU. Why, child, I always advised you to make your fortune.

VIC. Yes, but you pointed out very fallacious means.

LOU. (*pointing c. to window.*) Well, my dear, I counsel you to set up in some small way like myself. [*Knock.*]

GRI. (*outside.*) Is the lodging-room mistress within?

LOU. A customer. Yes, walk in. (*Enter GRIFFON, very ragged.*) Ah, Griffon, you?

GRI. Bless my soul! What, my lovely Baroness that was? Still in the smuggling trade, eh?

LOU. No, wretch. How can you look me in the face?

GRI. It's still handsome, my dear.

LOU. When the term of your imprisonment for the gambling transaction elapsed, did you not come, and under false pretence of some brilliant speculation, in the profits of which I was to share, borrow all the money I had, and have I ever seen you until this minute?

GRI. No, dear, the speculation was a failure, but you shall be repaid out of the profits of my last venture, which has been very lucky.

LOU. One would'nt think so by appearance.

GRI. Oh, there is a reason for that; this is my travelling dress. But surely I recognize that lovely figure yonder. Ah! how adversity

brings true friends together. I beg pardon, but to judge from your costume, madam, fortune does not appear to smile on you just now.

VIC. Your surmise is but too true.

GRI. Ah ! well, you shall share in my luck as well as Louise. A friend of mine—by the way an old acquaintance of yours—who has remained below to fasten the street door, wishes me to obtain quiet retired lodgings for a short time—hence this visit of mine *goes to the door*) Hector, my friend, all right ! come this way.

Enter HECTOR in ragged uniform with large bag and bundle.

HEC. I've bolted the door ; ladies, your servant.

GRI. Our old friends.

HEC. Delighted to renew the acquaintance.

VIC. Ha ! that man—his presence fills me with a presentiment of evil.

GRI. Oh, don't say so ! He's a noble fellow, and you'll find us most liberal lodgers. We want a quiet home, for a short time to settle our accounts, and to convert certain effects into gold, before we make another dash into high society.

LOU. Pretty figures for high society.

GRI. Don't sneer, we have just returned from—

HEC. *(aside)* The penal settlements.

GRI. From foreign travel. We have been in the sunny south.

HEC. *(aside)* The tropics.

GRI. We have suffered much, but our last speculation was a rare success—we return laden with treasure. Hector, just show some of our store *(opens the bundle)*, and let us make a present of two to our fair friends.

[Showing trinkets and shawl.]

LOU. Oh, how beautiful ! are these really yours ?

GRI. Yes ! and some shall be yours. Wear the shawl for my sake.

LOU. Oh, dear me ! I always liked you, Griffon. Are they not beautiful, Victorine ?

VIC. Yes ! *(with a sigh)* they remind me of my fortunate days.

GRI. They shall return to you, as an omen accept this necklace.

LOU. Gorgeous, beautiful. Oh, do put it on, and look once more like yourself.

VIC. Oh! that can ne'er be again.

GRI. Louise, dear, you see we are in feather, (*to VIC., who sighs.*) Don't sigh, Victorine, we have fortune in hand once more.

[*Loud knocking heard.*]

VIC. (*who has looked from side to window*)

Hark! some one knocks.

There's something wrong, for guards the house surround.

HEC. (*who has crossed to side window*)

The street is clear. I'll give them play;

But first one blow, for former glory's sake.

Then if they can, let them the brigand take.

[*Soldiers enter. He fires pistol, and leaps through window. Soldiers cross, and fire after him.*]

CAPT. CLA. The rogues and stolen goods together found,
Secreted in your house. The trinkets round
Your necks do all belong to me.

VIC. (*throwing them off and sinking on her knees*)
Pollution, hence! Oh, shame! oh, misery!
But I am innocent!

CAPT. CLA. No, no! Your guilt is plain. We can no mercy show.
She must to prison with these culprits go.

VIC. To prison! Infamy! Come Death before.
And yield the refuge man to me denies.

[*Taking out vial, and drinking rapidly.*]

'Tis here. Oh, welcome draught! Now all is o'er.

CAPT. CLA. Great Heav'n hold.

GRI. and LOU. She's poison'd, see she dies!

[*Tableaux. Scene closes.*]

SCENE II.—*A Front Street. Enter HECTOR.*

RECIT.

Ha ! ha ! Victoria, once more I'm free,
Once more a soldier, feel at liberty.
Their traps, and bonds I laugh to scorn.
To fall by such base means, I was not born !

ANDANTE.

Oh shame ! oh sorrow ! 'tis to think,
A soldier's martial pride should sink
To be a brigand ruffian's mate ;
Of galley slaves to risk the fate.
To starve, or crouch, and thief his bread,
All sense of honour, glory fled.
Ah ! better like my comrade slain,
By Cossacks spear'd on Moskwa's plain.
Ne'er mind ! ne'er mind ! ne'er mind.

ALLEGRO.

A brigand, still a soldier, I,
My foes, the gaolers, I defy ;
I do not steal, but plunder take,
I filch not, but a foray make ;
In thefted purses I behold,
The conqueror's spoils I seiz'd of old ;
And when I sight a quarry nigh,
Vive l'Empereur, is still my cry.
And when I sight a quarry nigh,
Vive l'Empereur, is still my cry.

[*Shot. He falls, and rises.*

I'm slain, ye dogs in ambuscade,
Come forth—you'll find I'm not afraid.
Life floods away ; but, e'er I die,
Once more, Vive l'Empereur, I cry.

Vive l'Empereur, &c.

[*Falls, and dies. Soldiers enter and carry him off.*

LAST SCENE.—(Same as SCENE I., ACT I.)—VICTORINE *discovered sleeping on bed—Spirit watching over her.—Music of last strain of finale, Act I.—Spirit vanishes.—Knocking at door.*

MIC. (*outside*)

Awake, Victorine, awake.

Dear Victorine, I pray you ope the door,

My last night's anger, love, has all blown o'er.

VIC. Last night ! Oh, Heaven, was *it* then but a dream !

Still at home, in my chamber, I seem.

The candle burns—the rose not faded yet.

Oh joy ! no shames or sorrows to regret.

Ha ! ha ! ha ! ha !

Oh ! blessed, blessed hour !

MIC. (*without*) Why don't you open the door, Victorine ?

VIC. In one moment, Michel. (*She begins to dress herself.*)

Let me look in the glass, and see if I am still young ; it were such sad thing to be old and ugly. No—no—all is well—I am but one night older.

[*Laughing and dancing.*]

LOU. (*knocking*) Victorine, we are waiting for you.

VIC. Louise !

GRIF. (*without*) Victorine,, I am impatient to wish you a good morning.

VIC. Griffon, too !

LOU. Let me in, and I'll help you.

GRIF. And I'll stay outside ; for I know what good manners require.

VIC. Michel ! I must see him first.

[*She is now dressed. She opens the R. door, and MICHEL enters dressed in his holiday clothes, with a nosegay.*]

VIC. Come in, Michel ; I believe you are my best friend, after all.

MIC. And you'll have me ?

VIC. That I will.

MIC. What, without conditions ?

VIC. Without any.

And now you may go and fetch the witnesses.

MIC. Oh, I have them all ready waiting down stairs. (MICHEL goes outside the door.) Come up, friends, come up.

Enter LOUISE and GRIFFON.

LOU. Come, come, my dear, how can you keep us waiting so.

GRIFF. I am invited ; and I shall amuse the party with a little conjuring.

MICHEL *re-enters*.

MIC. The hackney-coach is waiting.

LOU. *and* GRIFF. (*repeating*) A hackney-coach.

VIC. I am ready, Michel.

GRIFF. Why, what the devil does this all mean ?

VIC. Ask my husband.

GRI. *and* LOU. Husband ! who is he ?

VIC. My own dear Michel, to be sure.

MIC. Yes, her own dear Maehel, to be sure.

GRI. What, going to have the d——d mahogany shaving after all.

MIC. Yes, and you'd better not provoke me to set about planing and polishing you.

GRI. Well, I'll forgive ye, if you'll invite us to the wedding feast.

MIC. I invite you ? No, no ; here ends our acquaintance.

VIC. Nay, Michel, before you make an angry resolution, do as I did—sleep on't.

RONDO FINALE.

VIC. Oh, what bliss to wake from dreaming, love,
Find thy griefs were only seeming, love,

And joy's light around thee beaming, love,
Bid thy heart good morrow.

Doubts no more distressing,
Faith in vows expressing,
Heav'n our love seems blessing.

END.



